



ABSTRACT AND BIOGRAPHY

Program/Project Management and the High-Risk Plan

NASA "Contract Management" is designated by the Congressional Government Accountability Office (GAO) as a 'high risk' area for the Agency, and the designation has been in place since 1990. GAO considers Contract Management to include a broad set of disciplines, including program/project management. Recently, in answer to the continuing GAO designation, NASA developed a comprehensive Corrective Action Plan, with the goal of improving the effectiveness of its program/project management across the board, including: monitoring and analyzing contractor performance; life-cycle cost/schedule management practices; cost estimating practices; and associated business processes.

Specifically, NASA has defined success as maintaining a cost performance level for its portfolio of major development projects that is within 110% of the budget-weighted aggregate cost baseline; meeting the baseline schedule goals for its portfolio of major development projects, with aggregate schedule slippage falling within 110% of baseline; and sustaining mission success by staying on-course to meet Level 1 requirements for its portfolio of major development projects.

Participants will discuss how NASA is measuring and reporting performance against these success goals, coupled with progress of the seven initiatives NASA has developed to bring about the necessary improvements: Program/Project Requirements and Implementation Practices; Agency Strategic Acquisition Approach; Contractor Cost Performance Monitoring; Project Management Training and Development; Improve Life-Cycle Cost/Schedule Management Processes; IEMP Process Improvement; and Procurement Processes and Policies.

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Rita Svarcas is a Program and Management Analyst in the Office of Program and Institutional Integration (OPII) at NASA Headquarters. On behalf of the NASA Deputy Administrator and the Associate Administrator, OPII integrates decision-making processes and identifies and resolves issues that cross programmatic and/or institutional lines. Toward this end, OPII provides independent, "non-partisan" leadership and decision making for selected cross-cutting initiatives.

Ms. Svarcas's OPII responsibilities include leading a cross-functional NASA team that is taking an Agency-wide coordinated approach toward resolving the issues contributing to GAO's long-standing designation of NASA Contract Management as a High-Risk area. Prior to this assignment, Ms. Svarcas held a series of NASA positions in the procurement field, including: Procurement Officer, NASA Management Office at JPL;



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Contracting Officer, NASA Moscow Technical Liaison Office in Moscow, Russia; and Procurement Analyst and Contracting Officer at NASA Headquarters. Prior to her work for NASA, she was a Contracting Officer for the Department of Defense, including assignments at the United States Air Force Space & Missile Center and at the Pentagon. Ms. Svarcas holds a Master of Arts degree in Public Administration from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in Syracuse, New York.